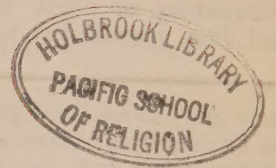




The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● MARCH 1979



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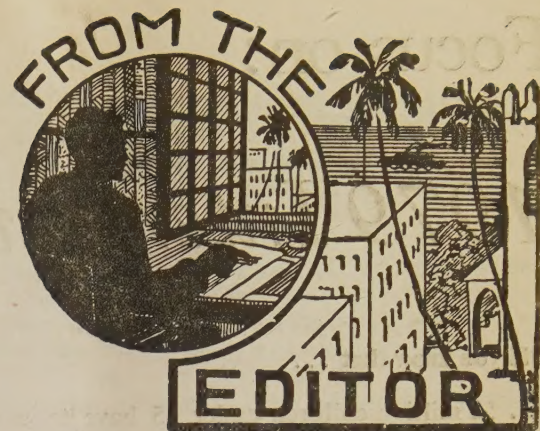
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Call for a Relevant Theology



One of the significant signs of the renewal taking place in Churches all over the world is the search for a theology relevant to our times. There is a growing realisation that the placid and passive theologies of the past are simply inadequate to cope up with the challenging demands of the turbulent present. Consequently biblical scholars are trying to adjust their theological sights and to come to grips with the task of reinterpreting the Christian faith in the light of contemporary history and human struggles. The Asian Theological Conference held at Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, in January, 1979, has done well to highlight the awareness that is gradually dawning upon the Churches in Asia to the need for up-dating their theologies and making them relevant to their Asian milieu,

This Conference was held under the auspices of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) which was formed at an ad hoc meeting at Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1976. The ecumenical significance and impact of the conference were greatly enhanced and enriched by the support of the Commission on Theological concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Protestant and Orthodox) and the Research Department of the Office of the Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (Roman Catholic). The participants of the conference included theologians, pastors, social workers, leaders of action groups, etc. belonging to the Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. The 85 participants consisting of delegates from 10 Asian countries and fraternal delegates from Africa, Latin America and the minorities of North America engaged themselves for about two weeks in study and live-in-experiences and in an endeavour to grasp the contemporary realities of the Asian societies and discover the role of theology and theologians in the struggle of Asian peoples for self-identity and human dignity.

The Asian reality to day is to be seen in the on-going struggle of the peoples of Asia for liberation from abject poverty which keeps millions and millions of people at a sub-human level of existence. It also comes out vividly in their fight against exploitation and injustice. In such a context the validity and relevance of our traditional theologies inherited from the Western Churches cannot but be questioned. Therefore the Conference rightly called the Asian Churches to recognise the hiatus existing between the economic,

political, social and cultural realities of the Asian situation and the theological formulations accepted from the West, and vigorously strive towards a relevant theology which can bridge the existing gulf between theology and the Asian context. Such a relevant theology, as affirmed by the Conference, 'starts with the aspirations of the oppressed towards full humanity... When Theology is liberated from its present race, class and sex prejudices, it can place itself at service of the people and become a powerful motivating force for the mobilisation of believers in Jesus to participate in Asia's on-going struggle for self-identity and human dignity.'

The poverty of the teeming millions of Asia and the cruel social injustices and economic exploitation under which they are groaning demand that our theology, if it is to be relevant and significant in our context, must acquire 'a very definite liberational thrust'. Such a liberating theology should be 'articulated and expressed by the oppressed community (itself) using the technical skills of Biblical scholars, social scientists, psychologists, anthropologists and others'. In other words, professional theologians should recognise the need for doing theology with roots in the history and struggle of the poor and the oppressed.

None would deny that in the peculiar Asian context theology should be man-centred and liberation-oriented. However, while doing such a theology with the aid of the analytical tools of other social sciences, we should avoid the danger of depending too much on social analysis ignoring or forgetting the Biblical perspectives which should inspire and inform all our efforts at evolving a relevant theology. As the final statement issued by the Conference says: 'For us Christians the Bible becomes an important source in the doing of theology. The God encountered in the history of the people is none other than the God who revealed himself in the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We believe that God and Christ continue to be present in the struggles of the people to achieve full humanity as we look forward in hope to the consummation of all things when God will be all in all'. The task of developing such a relevant theology should not be left to professional theologians alone. Ordinary Churchmen, lay people and grass-root workers also can play a very useful complementary role.

Focus on:

1979 International Year of the Child

Did you know that . . .

. . . 52 million children under 15 have to work?
Of whom 42 million are unpaid workers in family concerns, particularly in agriculture, while the other 10 million are paid workers in small workshops, factories, or on the land?

. . . millions of children cannot go to school because their parents are too poor?

. . . the above figures certainly only indicate part of the misery, because in many countries the economic statistics do not cover persons under 15, and because children who go to school and work at the same time are not usually included as part of the working population?

Can the International Community Supply the Remedy?

On December 21, 1976, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution declaring 1979 the International Year of the Child. The same year will see the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

This International Year of the Child was originally inspired by representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGO's), who recognized that the children are our most precious possession in this life but that these very children are especially in need of protection because they are powerless to claim their rights if society or an individual refuses them.

What are a child's rights? According to the United Nations Declaration . . .

- to affection, love and understanding.
- to adequate nutrition and medical care.
- to free education.
- to full opportunity for play and recreation.
- to a name and nationality.

The Right to special care, if handicapped.
to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national, or social origin.

Everyone who casts his eye on this list will certainly say—'All that goes without saying'. But is it really so

self-evident? Do we really always grant these rights without restriction to our children? Let us take the first of these rights, the right to affection, love and understanding. In our predominantly materialist world are children really always welcomed, are we prepared to restrain our demand for our share of comfort and wealth, to find the time in our hectic daily lives for their needs and troubles, to give them our love when they do not show love towards us, and be sympathetic to them when we feel we are ourselves misunderstood?

The object of the International Year of the Child is to stir up public opinion and hence to achieve a substantial improvement in all countries in the regular services provided for children. This can of course not be done through a unified programme, because the needs of children vary from country to country; there is a wide field here for 'do it yourself' initiatives. All countries have been invited to establish national committees to co-ordinate the efforts of individual organisations to bring about specific improvements in education, medical care, the law and so forth. But the setting up of new programmes in favour of children implies that new funds will be made available; and it is just in this respect that international solidarity has to come into play. Part of the effort of the developed countries needs to be devoted to improving the lot of their own children, and part should benefit the children in the developing countries.

National committees have been set up in some fifty countries to date, but it can be hoped that in the coming months this number will increase considerably. The committees work according to their own programmes, but certain common themes are beginning to emerge such as child protection, the child and the family, the handicapped child, child labour, abuse of drugs by children, refugee children, and many more. The framework is very wide, and it is to be hoped that society will bring new thinking to its attitude to children and give them the important place due to them as tomorrow's members of society. And society must not forget that children cannot wait. Everything that needs to be done for them needs to be done today, for with every passing day that a child cannot really be a child a day is subtracted from his childhood and he moves irrevocably onward towards adulthood. Today we know that the first years of a human being's life are decisive for the formation of his personality. If we want the adults of tomorrow to be happy people we must see that the children all over the world today can grow up happy and carefree.

What is the commitment of the churches for the International Year of the Child? The problem presents itself on two levels. Without doubt the Churches have a special duty to intercede in favour of the child, to try to ensure that his conditions of life in every society

are improved, and to contribute to his physical well-being.

But the task of the Churches goes deeper than this. The Churches have to ask themselves what place they give to the child in church life? Are the churches trying to do justice to children in the various forms of church life, do they offer the child teaching in Christian beliefs and worship which he is capable of understanding? Or are children merely small adults, marginally present at the liturgical celebration which does not touch their needs?

Ultimately it is a question of theological conception. What does being a child denote to a Christian? What do we mean when we speak of men as children of God? Is that simply a beloved Bible image, and should we not strive harder to understand the words of Jesus, when He said: 'Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. 19:14).

What some countries are doing?

Poland: The social committee for the construction of the Hospital-Monument 'The child's Health Centre', which is being built in memory of the 13 million children and young people who died in the Second World War, has decided that the main building of the hospital will be put into service at the beginning of 1979 as part of the activities for the International Year of the Child.

Afghanistan: The Government plans, as far as its possibilities allow, to build maternity clinics, crèches and kindergartens during the International Year of the Child.

Pakistan: The Government's efforts are to be concentrated on special measures for particularly handicapped children—orphans, physically and mentally handicapped, and young delinquents.

German Democratic Republic: The Alliance of Evangelical Churches in the GDR has collected voluminous factual material for use in church circles concerning particular problems (diapositives, film-strip, exhibition material, picture-book for the children, etc.).

Federal Republic of Germany: The national commission for the International Year of the Child has drawn up various programmes for children in Germany (child-battering, accidents to children, mental and psychic disorders, integration of foreign children, etc.) and for Third World children (health, nutrition, situation in education). A series of actions for the Third World are being planned which are intended to put international solidarity into practical effect. Information about the International Year of the Child can be obtained from:

IYC Secretariat, 866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N. Y. 10017, USA.

IYC Secretariat (Europe), Bocage-Building, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

(By Courtesy: *Reformed Press Service*)

World Confessional Families Meet in Geneva

Geneva (EPS)—The things which divide the churches should be seen not as 'possessions to be clung to' but as 'gifts to be shared'. This was one of the recommendations which came out of recent meeting attended by 46 representatives of 15 World Confessional Families (Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox, Lutherans, etc.) and the WCC.

The consultation met to consider the question 'how can the WCFs and the WCC develop more fruitful relationships in recognition of the fact that they all seek to serve the one ecumenical movement?'

They considered the theme under three main points: the urgency of developing ways to engage in common witness; the unity of the Church and the search for more effective relationships between the WCFs and the WCC.

In discussing 'common witness' the participants expressed the view that common witness and service within the ecumenical movement are too limited and that the things which divide and comprise separate identities should not be clung to but rather should be seen as gifts to be shared.

On the unity of the church the participants recognized that the WCC and the WCFs have 'constructive and complementary roles' to play. The consultation recommended 'adequate participation' of the WCFs in Faith and Order studies on doctrinal issues of unity and the avoidance of a fragmented approach. They expressed the desire to focus on the following four requirements of unity: ending prejudices and hostilities and lifting the condemnations; sharing one faith; being able mutually to recognize baptism, eucharist and ministry; and agreeing on ways of deciding and acting together.

The consultation also considered areas for more effective relationships and mentioned human rights, including religious liberty, dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies, inter-church aid, service activities for refugees and emergency aid, programmes for co-operation for development and ecumenical sharing of resources.

The consultation recognized that the WCC represents the most comprehensive forum in which the churches and confessions meet, and acknowledged that the 15 WCFs and churches are very different in their nature and their authority but there is a high degree of complementarity in the ways in which they participate in the one ecumenical movement. The participants expressed the belief that the consultation represented a further step in the process of discussion and reflection and will help toward a new relationship in which the WCC and the WCFs can more effectively serve their common commitment.

(By the courtesy of: *Ecumenical Press Service*)

The Untold Tale of Arunachal Pradesh

I

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Christian Community in India has recently been worried about happenings in Arunachal Pradesh. And rightly, because unspeakable things have happened in this part of the country.

However, when you speak of the Christian community in Arunachal Pradesh, think of simple villagers who do not know how to defend their rights in public forums and in law courts (there is nothing like legal processes in Arunachal, anyway). Think of a community that has never enjoyed the benefit of freedom during the last three decades. Think of a group that had become outcasts in a casteless society during the same period.

The few Christian young men who have been to school and the fewer who have been to college are just beginning to make their voice heard, but they need the support of their co-religionists in other parts of the country, so that their voice may not be a cry in the wilderness. One thing worthwhile the young Church has done: it has kept an accurate chronicle (not complete, be sure) of recent persecution. When one day the account will be published, the Christian community in India will receive the greatest shock of their lives. A few extracts from the clandestine document are given in this article.

A Philosophy for NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh)

But let us see how it all began. Strange as it may sound to you, when India won her independence, the Christian community in Arunachal Pradesh lost hers. When India passed a beautiful Constitution, the Christian community in Arunachal lost certain basic freedoms that every human being has a right to—chief among them, the freedom of religion, the freedom to profess a religion of one's choice and to propagate it. Self-appointed guardians of Arunachal culture came from outside the Union Territory, and the local people became mere observers of a drama (a tragedy in fact) that was going on. A policy for a Christ-less Arunachal was formulated in the Home Ministry (Government of India) and carried out with missionary zeal by the Commissioner, later the Lt. Governor K. A. A. Raja.

In all fairness we must admit that the early framers of a policy for NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) meant well. The 'Philosophy for NEFA' which was formulated by Verrier Elwin and whole-heartedly accepted by Pandit Nehru was proposed as the gospel for Arunachal administrators. However, the book was too poetical to be practical. All that the anthropologist author

said in one part of the book, was contradicted by the norms given by the practical administrator in another part of the same book. There was no consistency, except perhaps in the sincere love that Mr. Elwin had for the tribal people.

The Implementation of the Philosophy

In the actual implementation of the Philosophy for NEFA we may notice five distinct phases or traits: (1) A genuine concern for the preservation and fostering of tribal cultures, (2) An eagerness to isolate the Union Territory from any outside influence, (3) An effort at Indianising the tribal people (teaching the national anthem, the national language, something about the country's great men, etc.), (4) An attempt at Hinduisation of the tribals, feeling certain that that would be the best way to Indianise them, (5) A systematic effort to block even the least Christian influence from penetrating the Union Territory, combined with an attempt to suppress the Christian community already in existence.

There is nothing as commendable as a genuine concern for the preservation and fostering of tribal cultures. But the idea of isolation was neither good in itself, nor practical when it came to implementation. The whole set of administrators were outsiders; teachers, skilled workers and technicians of all sorts, were all people from non-tribal societies. So what became of the policy of isolation? It was used by the Administration to keep out the people they disliked. Harish Chandra, a journalist, wrote: 'Why is the Inner line there today... I am afraid it is there to prevent thinking people from going in. Otherwise I have known most objectionable characters taken in by some officers who consider themselves owners of the frontier'. Of all men to be excluded from the area was the Christian preacher, and even any Christian who was actively interested in his own religion.

Next, the effort at Indianising the tribal people vitiated into an attempt at Hinduising them. It must be stated that none of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have a Hindu background. Anthropologists of any worth have testified to the fact. Elwin even felt they were somewhat inclined to Christianity. But a whole lot of literature was produced to prove that the tribal gods were Hindu gods in reality; an effort was made to link the history of each tribe with Hindu mythology.

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[MARCH 1979]

Interview with C.A.C.S., Madras

[Rev. V. M. David (Diocese of Central Kerala) interviews C.A.C.S., Madras]

I. What is the meaning of Charismatic renewal? It is the receiving and experiencing of gifts of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus Christ by waiting on Him. It is like the Upper Room experience at Pentecost. It is essential to keep alive the gifts He gives through the Holy Spirit so that they may bear fruit in everyday life. It is the Acts of the Apostles in action and continuation. The main mark of this movement is love. It is a renewed expression of the gospel.

II. What is your evaluation of the Charismatic renewal and its contribution to the renewal of the Churches? God keeps His promises. This is God's timely action in history, a fulfilment of the vision of the prophet Joel, the pouring out of God's spirit on everyone in the last days. Churches are charged with electric excitement. This makes the Church the real power station. Many are resurrected from the dead life. In all Charismatic conventions and meetings inner healing takes place and the burden is lifted. Non-Christians take part in them in large numbers. Members of the congregation conduct the service and preach. There is renewed realisation and renewed expression of the Gospel. The life of the pastor becomes the Gospel of the people and the life of the people the Gospel of the place. It contributes to spiritual and structural renewal. Without this God is far away, the Gospel becomes a dead letter, the Church a mere organisation, authority a matter of domination, mission a matter of propaganda, liturgy an empty evocation and Christian living a slave morality. With this renewal, the Risen Christ is always present, the Gospel becomes a power of life, the Church a power station, authority a liberating force, mission a pentecost and theology life.

III. How are you personally involved in it? I am personally involved in it through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. My spiritual life was dry and arid, I had a heart attack three years ago and in the excruciating pain, I confessed my sins and admitted my mistakes. He took the deadness out of my life. I had a revelation about myself. I had a vision of the living Jesus Christ and had a resurrecting touch. He gave me a new heart and I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, after many days of fasting and prayer. I am experiencing my own pentecost. It is not individualistic. It is a sharing and it joins our fellowmen. I have a personal joy in the winning of souls for Christ.

IV. What is your own experience about the gift of tongues and its reappearance as a common gift? The gift of tongues is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The tongue is loosened to declare what God has done and to praise Him at the breaking of our heart's chains of sin. The praise takes wings, unable to be conveyed through known languages and the Holy Spirit gives new grace to express them. This new grace and Power helps, prompts and does the talking. This is intelligible to follow believers of the same spirit. They forget environment but keep perfectly sober. There is the

feeling of simultaneous existence in two planets and the heaven is too close to touch. It is the Spirit praying with us and God is being glorified in all the tongues of the world and the call for the whole universe to praise God. It gives me the motivation to translate emotion into action, sharing someone's troubles, bearing someone's burden and helping someone in need. I feel Jesus Christ more closer and real than any earthly person can, and this I do while bathing and washing the sores of the old, invalid in the beggar relief centre. It does not stop there. The Spirit of Christ helps us to discover new truths. It makes the ground spiritually fertile enough to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If a man thinks that the gift of tongues is the highest gift of baptism by the Holy Spirit and stops thinking with it he is spiritually dead; he refuses to discover new truths which the Holy Spirit reveals. The gift of tongues I receive in private and group prayer when spending long hours with God and not in public speeches. It has in my case a therapeutic value.

V. What contribution does the Charismatic renewal give to Christian Unity? The Charismatic renewal has amazing ecumenical implications. It removes insularity and destroys fences. It is in destroying barriers, not in erecting them, that the Charismatic movement is active. No Church has the right to assume that it is right in everything. We do not possess the whole truth. There is no mention of R.C. Church, Protestant Churches or Pentecostal Churches in Holy Scriptures. The wonderful guidance of the Holy Spirit is that people of different Churches at local level meet together for intercessory prayers and the Holy Spirit purifies them for God's action in the longings sincerely brought forward. The sincerity in needs with God's help will help to bridge the gaps among them and take men as they are without sticking labels. Joint activity helps us to forget the silly man-made divisions and see Jesus Christ all in all and He is not divided. This is the almighty unifying force.

VI. Please explain the social consciousness of the Charismatics and their responsibility? The Charismatic group is not in any sense a frothy kind of thing, a huddle of pious people shutting the door against the sufferings of the world lost in prayer and praise, connoisseurs of preaching mutually congratulating among themselves on the excellence of their Christian experience. They translate emotion into action. They see Christ in the abandonment of self-glory, the acceptance of the humiliation of humanity, the toil of servitude, and in the agony of the Cross. They believe that the most God-like thing in the world is the passion to help others. The life of the Charismatic is not selfish or self-centred. It is the life of care and concern and the great quality is mercy. We care so much for others that we forget ourselves seeing them with their eyes, feeling with their hearts and thinking about them with their minds. To help the tempted, we have experienced temptation; to help the sorrowing we have experienced sorrow; and to help the hungry we have experienced hunger. We experience oneness with the inmates of relief centres and sit where they sit. The Holy Spirit gives us special grace to care for our fellowmen. We do not mind what the world and life owe us but what we owe the world and life.

VII. How is the loyalty of the Charismatic to their respective Churches? Very loyal to the Church, dignitaries and pastors. To them Church is the context of growth and development. It is through the Church

(Continued on page 9)

In What sense is the Bible Distinctively the Word of God?

I

Martin Luther once said: 'The Bible is the cradle in which Christ is laid.' This is why it is unique, authoritative and inspired. The ordinary man is torn between the two ideas of the Bible—one, 'The infallible Word of God' and the other, 'A mere collection of fairy tales.' Or again, a scientist has a tendency to out-date the Bible and has a feeling that much in it cannot stand his ingenious investigations. A modern intellectual may think that the conditions and advancement of the present-day world are such as to lend a deaf ear to what the Bible has to say as a message from and of God. But these are the reasons for the ordinary man or the scientist or a 'modernist' for not taking up his copy of the Bible and reading it regularly and prayerfully—which if he is a Christian he is expected to do—and not denying the facts of the Bible. What was spoken was spoken, and what is written is written. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away' (Lu. 21 : 33) (Ps. 119 : 152).

But much as the scientist and the intellectual feel disinclined towards the Bible, God is using that very science and intellect of man to discover the fact that the Bible is a true record of the Word of God. The results of the modern scientific methods, of textual criticisms and the archaeological discoveries show only too strongly that it is so. The Lambeth Report says: 'The Bible has come through the travail of modern geological and scientific criticism with its authority not damaged but enhanced' (Lam. 1958, 2 : 6).

While remaining a solid rock amidst the attacks of many, the Bible proves its relevance to the present plight of ours. On the one hand we have scientific advance in knowledge which may lead to destruction if it is not directed aright; and on the other hand, to the general decline of moral and social life already apparent in dishonesty, sexual laxity and such like. The message of the Bible as bringing God's Word to men, if listened to, can put us on the right road, as the Psalmist says, 'The entrance of thy Word giveth light' (Ps. 119 : 130).

I would like to point out that the Bible is the Word of God as it bears witness to *the history of Israel, the Word of God Himself as revealed in Jesus Christ, and in the life and mission of the early Christian community.*

I. From the point of view of the history of Israel

The Bible in the first place, is a witness to the fact that God speaks through the history of Israel, having the lordship and control over it. It is the sphere in which His purpose is outlined and worked out as He

is both its author and principal actor. In order to have a nation whose history He can handle, we see His Word operating. It is just as in the Creation, so here. When God speaks to Abraham or to Moses immense historical consequences follow. The very coming into being and existence of Israel is in response to the Word of God. F.D. Maurice says that, 'the uniqueness of the Bible as inspired lies in the uniqueness of the history that it contains, the history of the Kingdom of God in the midst of the world'. When therefore, we read Israel's history we hear God speaking and see Him acting. God is in ultimate control and this is revealed in the great deliverance of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. He did that not only for Israel but also for other nations; when He brought the Philistines from out of Captor. In this sense He is acting now too with the smaller nations who were once under the domination of bigger countries in helping them achieve their independence. In the favour shown to the nation of Israel in giving her the knowledge of Himself as the only and true God, she discerned the same hand at work in the history of other nations as well as in her own, and thus became the means of communicating to the world the idea of 'Monotheism'. So the Bible reveals a pattern of truth in which all men already stand and Israel is called to bear witness to this truth in word and life.

Israel's history cannot be fully understood apart from the prophets who saw clearly in the events of their times the hand of God. Their message may be a commentary on the historical events of the day. It carried a distinct meaning to them in the sense that it was a 'Pull-up'; but it could not be subsequently ignored as it also emphasised a responsibility of bringing God's purpose to bear on the nations of the world. 'God is the Lord of all nations, even if they do not acknowledge His rule. He is righteous in the performance of His purposes. Israel is in a privileged position by covenant relationship and a responsibility goes with it. He hates disloyalty of any kind. To them who flout His will, His love will be turned into judgement, frustration and national disorder and doom. But along with disaster goes also God's promise of deliverance, and if people repented they could be constituted into a new holy people. This by its nature, could be applicable to all times. No doubt some modern preachers with a prophetic insight, interpret certain passages from the prophecy of the Old Testament bringing out their significance at the time of utterance and also their possible meaning for us in our own times. For example, the interpretation of the type of good and bad figs in Jeremiah 24 representing not only the captives of Judah, who would be carried away for their good into the land of the

Chaldeans, and the King Zedekiah and his princes and the residue of Jerusalem, but also stretching the applicability to modern nations who in their relationships to other nations and in the sight of God could be as good or bad as those figs, was well brought out once in a sermon in England. Those who heard it might have reacted in different ways, but that does not alter the fact that God has spoken through His servant. When therefore a man reads the Bible listening to God, he has God's word in Him and can make tremendous appeal to others to hear God speaking to them in His word, the Bible.

Even though the prophetic hopes failed, as they did in the case of Israel because the few who had returned from exile were found to have become unfaithful, there arose what is called the Apocalyptic Literature and it evinced the hope that even if Israel's history had failed, and the hopes of the prophets, God can still break in from outside history and establish a new heaven and a new earth! It shows that God's purpose is to go forward. The whole world finds itself in a chaos today, having been completely frustrated in its efforts to arrive at some solution of existing tensions. Nuclear weapons, discovery of space ships, jet planes—all these threaten the very existence of this tiny earth! But divine intervention of some sort in the time and history of our day could be an apocalyptic hope. But God keeping Himself within the history of Israel did break into this world when He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. 'At this point', says Bishop Neill, 'the great purpose depends utterly and solely on Jesus—on His faithfulness and His obedience. At that moment He is Israel; He is the people of God; He is the incarnation of the purpose of God with His world.' This is a proof to the world of all that is true in Israel's life.

REV. D. M. SAMUEL.

(To be Continued)

The Untold Tale. . .—(Continued from page 4)

gical figures and stories . . . so much so that the books of quality that have come out in recent years on tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh are few and far between, and even the few sometimes manifest certain weaknesses described above.

The Hinduisation process went further ahead. Temples were put up at Government expense, Rama Krishna Mission was invited to open schools where Hinduism would be taught and Hindu worship promoted, a network of Ashrams and institutions in Arunachal and Assam were subsidized for giving Hindu education to tribal children, Hindu festivals were solemnised, poojas were offered. In the early years, children who got admission into some Christian institution in Assam or Meghalaya through the personal initiative of the parents, would be called back and sent for re-education to some Rama Krishna school anywhere in India. Recalcitrant parents would be threatened, harassed or bribed, as the wisdom of the Administration inspired. This method of pulling the tribal people has not quite died out as yet: students may be called to the DC's court, harangued, threatened, harassed and warned that no job will be given them when they pass out of a Christian Institution. Studying in Shillong is specially forbidden (for fear of Christian influence). Scholarship is always refused to students studying in Christian schools. The Government stipend for a child studying in Rama Krishna school is as high as Rs. 360. If the people did not

become Hindus, it is because they just didn't want to. Elwin had enough perception to admit years ago that one could not expect Arunachal people to accept Hinduism in a serious manner.

Weeding out Christianity

Nor did the Administration merely stop with an attempt at Hinduisation. They felt it their bounden duty to weed out the dangerous creeper that was stretching its wild shoots into the high Himalayas: Christianity.

Even before Independence there was a small community of Christians in Arunachal Pradesh. In spite of persecution, the Christian community registered a steady growth. No outside missionary (not even Indian) ever worked in the Union Territory. The Prophets and preachers of Christianity were all local men who had fallen deeply in love with Christ. And the religion of Christ spread from man to man, from home to home. When the Administration raises a hue and cry about 'foreign' influence in Arunachal Pradesh, it makes no sense at all to anyone who knows anything about the actual situation in that part of the country. Not to speak of foreign, not even Indian Christian preachers are allowed into the Union Territory. Recently a Catholic priest who had gone to meet his friends in the Tirap District with a regular permit valid for two weeks (a unique case in 30 years), was given a quit order by the DC within 24 hours, though, having been involved in an accident the priest was lying in bed in the house of a friend. He was found dangerous even in bed. And what is more interesting, soon after, the DC was given a promotion (for such admirable vigilance!).

The Christian community in Arunachal grew not due to any help it received from outside, but in spite of the absence of it. There was no Christian inducement to speak of; all the inducement was on the other side. Anyone who gave up Christianity, or offered to persecute the Christians, was given suitable remuneration by the Administration. Would-be Christians of Arunachal Pradesh went to Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland begging for Baptism, pleading for Bibles, eagerly asking for Christian literature. Could a Christian heart refuse? With the spiritual food that these means provided, the Christian community in the Union Territory kept alive and grew in strength.

(Courtesy: *The Examiner*)

(To be Continued)

WANTED

Wanted an Executive Secretary for the All India Christian Council for Women.

Qualification: A graduate experienced in church Women's Work.

Age: Above 40.

Salary: About Rs. 600 + T.A. (actuals).

Apply to: MRS. CLARA CLARKE,
President, A.I.C.C.W.,
Bishop's House,
Madras-600 086.

Applicants called for interview should come meeting their own travel.

The Church in the Secular Society in India

When Christians Confess their faith they include the sentence :

'And I believe in one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'.

The Church is therefore an object of belief. The Church is the creation of God and we believe about the church as a result of our belief in God. As the instrument of God's purpose, the Church has a supernatural origin and life. The nature of the Church is determined by the fact that it comes from God ; its function is determined by the fact that it lives for the glory of God.

From the beginning, the Church has operated over the whole range of life ; it will so continue until all men are gathered into one in Christ. The goal is the creation of a community consisting of men and women who have responded to the love of God, revealed in Christ ; and thus they are united to one another in a fellowship which transcends space and time. The instrument for this purpose of fellowship is the Church.

We dare to call ourselves Christians not because of any peculiar goodness or benevolence or merit of our own, but because by the mercy and invitation of God, we belong to the community on earth which bears the name of Christ. The Church is therefore the community which God has made and whose members have been chosen by God to reveal His power and love.

Church in India

The Church in India has reached a nodal point because of both practical and theological reasons. A nodal point is a point of saturation, a point of no growth and often a point of stagnation. If we as Church are to survive, we have to take new shoots at this point as new shoots are always a sign of life. But the Church History tells us that whenever the Church has reached the end of the road, there always emerged a leading kindly light ; there was a breaking in of new creativity, intuition and insight. And such creativity was always the result of work and witness of dedicated and sensitive souls or groups who as a result of their struggles emerged with new light and a new vision.

Church and Conversion in Secular India

The New Testament affirms that conversion is 'metanoia' a right-about-turn and implies much more than a change of mind. It is a new creation through the work of the Holy Spirit. It involves complete re-orientation of oneself. But, in actual fact in India, conversion often meant a change from one community to another and Baptism has been made to appear as an act by which a person repudiates his ancient cultural heritage and accepts an alien culture. A question therefore arises 'In the secular society of India, can one

be a Christian without incorporating himself into the sacramental, congregational, liturgical life of the Church?' How do we account for the faith of the 'Secret Christians' in South India?

Church's Role

The Church in India should no longer be just a 'gathered community' 'a chosen people' or not even a scattered community ; it should be 'a people's Movement' helping the community by being its path-finder. This is a difficult task.

If the Church is the disciple of Jesus of Nazareth who came with good news for the poor, then its place is with the teeming, unlettered, neglected millions of men and women of our country. Its place is with them to recognise these unfortunates as men and women, to honour these afflicted people as persons, to bring them the sense of their own dignity, to enable them to feel sound and to give them hopes in their life and to share the straightness of their souls. The Church must join them in building their inner vision, inner strength and self-confidence and trust in their united action.

Its services have tended to relieve rather than to liberate ; to palliate rather than to eradicate ; as a result the good done by the Church has often been cancelled out by our elitist services in the shape of costly educational and medical institutions which contribute towards the forces of 'sophisticated exploitation'. The Church, to be spiritual like Jesus, is to be with the lowly in order to help, love and hope. This is the role of the Indian church in the country's secular society.

Church's Concern in a Secular Society

The Church's ruling concern will not be to preserve itself but to give itself away to be broken and shared 'Jesus-like' so that men may live and come to taste the fullness of Being offered to them by God in Christ whom He raised to New Existence.

In Secular Society, we can find that the Church which stands for salvation stands for the freedom for guilt and fear. It guarantees release from the power of sin. It makes us strive for a new society of Justice and peace, and for the restoration on human rights and human dignity to all persons. It drives one to the realisation of the underserved love of God and His acceptance without any discrimination.

It has now come to be widely accepted that the Church has to play a 'prophetic role' in God's plan of salvation in a secular society. And by this, we can mean the uncompromising demand for social justice and scathing condemnation of religious and social injustice.

Our country has of late become a land of institutionalised violence. Undernourishment, unemployment, infant-mortality, uncontrolled population growth, social discrimination, oppressive exploitation, widening gap, between the rich and the poor, rampant corruption and communalism are all forms of violence. The Church in India is therefore called upon to join the positive forces in the country to overcome these situations.

The Church is a community. God chose not individuals, but a people, the people of Israel. This is very significant for us today in the secular society. God's way of salvation was not saving individuals and then making them into a group ; but His way is to call a people

and provide opportunities for these people—these chosen people to respond to His love. To be a person always means, to be in a community. Israel gave us the concept of corporate personality in which the individual and the society are inseparably bound together—(Psalm 22 : 22, 26 : 12). In the community it becomes possible for members to know and love one another to the extent of mutual sharing and supporting. The Church is that community of Christ.

God has created and redeemed this world, which implies a more just distribution, not only of wealth, but also health, education, security, housing and opportunity.

Our Government and we will be true to God's calling only if we co-operate with the search for this more equitable allocation. In so far as we hinder or are indifferent to it, we risk not only social and political disruption, but also the judgment of God.

The Image

The image of the Church in a secular society is important. It is highly important what image our own members of the Church have of our Church. It is only through the members' active participation, discussion and struggling together, the Church can be faithful to its calling. Of course, we should also be concerned about the image which our fellow Christians in other countries have of our Church in secular India.

The image is found in the life style of our members, their care and concern for the neighbours. Vindictiveness, unfair practices in appointments, casteism and such negative elements distort the image of our Church and tarnish its reputation in secular India.

It is justice, compassion, fairplay, kindness, impartiality which would stand out rather than the impressive statistics of our performance and achievements. The standard set by the Church for itself should be higher than the standard that prevails in the country. The image of the Church in the secular society in fact is the image of the crucified and Risen Christ. We are the bearers and proclaimers of this image and we are called to be worthy of this unique privilege.

The Bible is a Secular Book

The Bible deals with all sorts of events which a newspaper editor accepts for publication. The Bible is concerned with secular events ; wars, revolutions, enslavements, liberations, immigrants, refugees, famines, epidemics etc. We miss these because we do not sufficiently treat the Bible as a whole. If we treat it so, we will find in Bible, poetry, prayers legislations, genealogy and the rest. In short, it is a universal history beginning with the saga of Christians and ending with a vision of gathering together of all the nations and the consummation of God's purpose for mankind. The Bible is therefore an outline of world history.

Church's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Church in India to fight against forces which violate human integrity, insult human dignity, and which encourage sub-human living condition so that man may be set free.

Christian theology and Christian proclamation of the 'Good News' will be credible in India in its secular society only if the Church boldly established an identity and solidarity with the oppressed, the suppressed and the powerless who have to be liberated.

S. PONRAJ,

Secretary, National Christian Council of India.

Interview with C.A.C.S., Madras—(Contd. from page 5)

commitment to Christ that fellowship with and loving care of our fellowmen is achieved. We practise the thing and have honest partnership with God and Church.

VIII. How does the Charismatic movement work? Christian truth must be in the blood as well as in the brain and must become part of our own life blood. The Charismatic theology has connection with the ordinary man in solving his day to day problems with the power of Jesus Christ. He believes every problem contains the seed of its own solution through prayer and prayer is more important than preaching. Prayer allows the Holy Spirit to intercede, letting God in. He feels that Christ is more real than any earthly person and closer than the breath he breathes, and has a first hand experience of Him. He is radiant, vibrant and victorious. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is Christ likeness. He is certain in his bitterest moments that nothing in life or in death can separate him or those whom he loves from the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord. The movement is gathering momentum like a gale. This is not to repeat the successes of the past but to do the impossible. Here is the start to set the world aflame with Charismatic renewal. Down on our knees is the way to this. I have thrown my heart and body and soul into this movement to win souls for Christ through the human touch He bids us to extend. I believe this is the only job in the world. I invite you all to release yourself to the movement of the Holy Spirit and this will keep you moving and make life exhilarating and pentecostal. The triumphant Christ is with us to make the darkness in and around us the very fuel for kindling the light of life. Join your loving hands with us to set the world on fire through Charismatic renewal. Here is the difference. And the difference is Jesus Christ.

IX. Please explain the mode of your Charismatic meetings and its impact? We have Charismatic Conferences, Conventions, retreats and fasting cum prayer vigil. We usually devote one-third of the time for singing. We see the Holy Spirit from the stand point of personal experience as the Choir Master helps to enjoy unctonized soul-singing according to needs. For preaching, we set apart ordinarily the same one-third time in order to comfort the broken hearts and stir them into action. The living Jesus is to be seen and reflected while preaching. The rest is for prayer. At first silent prayer helps us to feel the centre of our being, relaxing, detecting the heart beat and beyond, harmonizing with the time beat and tempo of God. The Holy Spirit as the explorer into our sub-conscious excavating, unearthing and discovering the real man, dropping the dead weights and strips of labels and externals. We submit ourselves in the way in which God sees us. The second is praying out the Holy Spirit as the confessor. There is nothing too small, too private and too shameful to take to God. We let the Holy Spirit pray through us; we become docile and get ourselves guided by His movements. The blessing will be only a matter of 'cause and effect'—the Upper Room shaking experience as at the beginning. The rope of Charismatic renewal is long enough to 'heavenige' our vision and make our congregation the real power House for Christ.

Praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

C.S.I. Church, Arpookara
Kottayam—686 008 (South India).

My Tribute to Late Rt. Rev. S. J. Samuel

The sad news that the Rt. Rev. Subrahmanyam Joseph Samuel, Retired Bishop of the Diocese of Coimbatore has entered eternal rest at 2 a.m. on 30th January 1979 at Christina Rainy Hospital, Madras flashed in the Newspapers and the All India Radio. The funeral took place at St. George's Cathedral cemetery, Madras preceded by service at 9 a.m. on 31st January '79. The Moderator, Bishops of the C.S.I. and the Lutheran Church, the Presbyters, friends and relations attended the solemn burial service. The Rt. Rev. Clarke spoke movingly on the qualities of Bishop Samuel basing his text on Psalm 8 : 5 'Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour'. The Most Rev. Ananda Rao Samuel, Moderator conducted the burial service.

In paying my humble tribute to the late Bishop Samuel with whom I had intimate contact from his school days, I wish to highlight the qualities in his life and personality which may inspire us to emulate him in some way. Born of Hindu parents at a village by name Thoranampathy in Salem District, he along with his young widowed mother and grandfather migrated to Chingleput through the influence of his uncle late Rev. M. L. Jeevarathnam who was also a convert and accepted Christ in his childhood. After completing his studies in the U.F.C.M. High School, Chingleput and the Christian College, Madras he joined the United Theological College, Bangalore and took the degree of the Bachelor of Divinity in 1931.

I could recall with pleasure how he was happily married to Kamalam Samuel in 1932 and started his career as a humble servant of God beginning as an evangelist at Kancheepuram, under Dr. Maclean. He was ordained as Presbyter in November 1933 at St. Andrew's Church, Choolai, Madras where he served as Pastor for nine years. He served the Congregation at Kancheepuram as a Pastor and also as Circle Chairman for Kancheepuram and Sreeperambadur Pastorates. He happened to be the Hony. Secretary of the Madras Diocesan Council for a biennium. He acted as Bishop's Commissary twice in the absence of Bishop Hollis and once in the absence of Bishop Chellappa. He was appointed to act as the Correspondent of St. Paul's High School, Madras for a period of six months in 1955. He was twice the Vice-President of the Tamil Nadu Christian Council. While he was at Sreeperambadur as Circle Chairman, the State Government appointed him as the Honorary Magistrate and President of the Bench Court for two years. In November 1955 he went to Edinburgh to do postgraduate study in Theology for one year. Thus he has served as Presbyter of the Diocese of Madras for twenty years.

While he was the Secretary of the Bible Society, Madras Auxiliary, his name was proposed to the Bishopric in Coimbatore Diocese. He accepted the responsibility with courage and spirit of obedience when he found it was God's will for him. He obeyed the Call of the Heavenly Father to become the Chief shepherd of His flock in the Diocese of Coimbatore in December 1959 at the age of 56.

I am told that as Bishop he had the foresight to provide the financial stability of the Diocese by the sale of unused land in the Diocese. From the sale proceeds the shopping centre at Salem, the building at Coimbatore accommodating the Diocesan Office with spacious rooms for Committee meetings and for other purposes were built. These buildings will remain standing monuments to remember him. He took special interest and care over the orphanages for the tribal children in Gudalur and Kotagiri. He was a loving shepherd not afraid to chide, but ever ready to embrace. He was a good administrator, prompt in his correspondence and fair in his administration of justice. As a true Bishop he was firm as a rock in his decisions. His judgements were always mature. He was humble and yielding in terms of understanding. He identified himself with the problems of the common man and tried to help him. He carried on cheerfully and courageously with the demanding work and trying problems of a Bishop. He bore malice towards none and was prepared to pay the price for his outspokenness. He was highly respected for his strong sense of conviction, knowledge of business and high personal integrity.

He made everyone in his company feel quite at home and pleasant by his sparkling wit and humour. He was obedient to God's Call and faithful to His calling till his retirement in 1972. He happily settled at Thirukalukundram, a pilgrim centre nine miles from Chingleput where he had already built a comfortable house.

I should not fail to express my appreciation to his partner—in life Mrs. Kamalam Samuel who was the moving spirit in all his pastoral activities both as Presbyter and Bishop. She has been growing with him fitting herself well to serve in a wider capacity as Bishop's wife. As an ideal and devoted wife, she had taken care of him whenever he had fallen seriously ill. Bishop's health continued to cause anxiety since 1975 forcing him get admitted in Kalyani Hospital, Madras to undergo a major surgical operation and later on at Rainy Hospital, Madras where he remained as an in-patient for nearly two months till he breathed his last on 30th January 1979 at the age of 76. His sharp wit and humour were evident most when his suffering was greatest because his faith was great. God's strength was more manifest in his illness, when, like Paul he would have remembered his Father's comfortable words 'My grace is sufficient for Thee'.

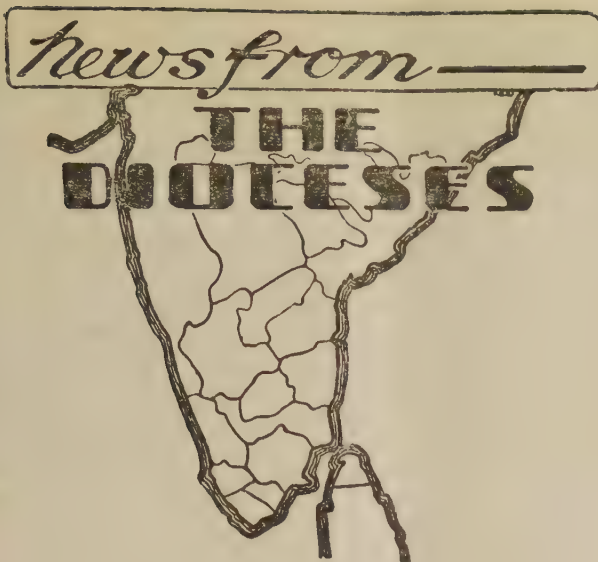
Bishop Samuel has left behind his beloved wife, three daughters, a son, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grand children and a large circle of relations and friends to bemoan his loss.

We thank God for the life, character, ideals, achievements and personality of Bishop Samuel and not the least for his love, sympathy, consideration and understanding of the people who had come in close contact with him.

Thus he lived, thus he died to make meaningful the memorable and worthy words of St. Paul.

'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me that day'.

SIMPSON RAJARATNAM



DIOCESE OF MADRAS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 17TH SESSION OF THE MADRAS DIOCESAN COUNCIL

I would like Presbyters and Secretaries to kindly highlight the thinking of the Council.

1. We thanked God for the 30 years of unity in the Church of South India and committed ourselves to further unity in Christ and with the Church of North India and the Mar Thoma Churches.
2. We reviewed the five point programme and the five year plan pledging ourselves to continue to do our best for the 5 point programme.
3. There was a strong plea to be more a caring, sharing and daring Diocese. We must be much more caring for the have-nots. The intellectual have-nots, the economic have-nots and above all the spiritual have-nots. There must be much more caring by the urban churches for the rural churches, the richer institutions for the poorer institutions, the richer people for the poorer people. Our involvement in the plight of the Scheduled Caste Christians is an expression of a caring church.
4. There was a strong feeling that Elementary Schools and the buildings were very badly neglected and perhaps we had the longest discussion after the report of this Committee. It was resolved to make a strong plea to all the city congregations to send to the Diocesan Treasurer Rs. 1,000 per city congregation and per city institution to build up a fund for the proper maintenance of the Elementary Schools. The Bishop pointed out the miserable and deplorable conditions of most of our elementary schools.
5. It was also felt that we must do more Evangelism and there was also a suggestion that each congregation budget regularly a good percentage in their annual budget for Evangelism.

6. International Children's Year: It was felt that we should work hard to help the poor village children and raise scholarships for the poor. We work on a motto 'HELP A CHILD—SAVE A CHILD'. We had hoped to have a Mass Children's Rally on the 27th January with the Chief Minister as our chief guest. But unfortunately he is unable to come. We shall inform you about the Children's Rally giving you the date, time and place.

RT. REV. SUNDAR CLARKE,
Bishop in Madras.

DIOCESE OF MADURAI AND RAMNAD

The Diocesan Council of the Madurai and Ramnad Diocese took place from 11th to the 13th January, 1979 at Madurai. The Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Pothirajulu, Bishop in Madurai and Ramnad Diocese presided over the Council and gave the main theme address. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Amirtham and the Rev. Bose Meiyappan spoke on the theme: 'Developing Clusters of Missionary Congregations.'

The following Office-Bearers were elected unanimously for the term 1979-81:

Deputy Chairman—Rev. Samuel A. Ramar

Clerical Secretary—Rev. D. Jesudoss

Lay Secretary —Mr. J. Eddy

N.B.—Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Pothirajulu was consecrated as Bishop on 19th August, 1978.

KARNATAKA CENTRAL DIOCESE

THE SYNOD LEVEL INAUGURATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

Speech by: RT. REV. K. E. GILL

This evenings function is a programme of the Synod, but since it is being held in Bangalore, I have the privilege of saying something of the plans of this Diocese for celebrating the International Year of the Child.

Firstly, what programmes do we already have for the children? Statistically the answer is 8 High Schools—some with primary attached, 6 Primary Schools, 10 Hostels, 11 Child Day Care Centres, 2 Training Centres, 3 Medical Centres. Six of the ten hostels and all the eleven Child Day Care Centres have been started during the last five years. Most of the Churches have active Sunday Schools.

Then, what new programmes are we planning at Diocesan level?

1. Plans for a day care centre for mentally handicapped children are in a final stage. This will be located in All Saints' Church compound and associated with Cathedral School. This is a completely new field we are entering, but one in which the need has been clearly established.

2. A new programme for Sunday School Teachers training has already been experimented within one area of the Diocese, with excellent results. This is now being conducted in another area, and the whole Diocese will be covered during this year.
3. We are publishing a book for art and craft work for young children.
4. The 'Help a Child' project which seeks more local support, and will ensure the continuity of the programmes, is being intensified.

However, the main emphasis for the year will be on programmes planned and implemented at the local level. In the past we have tried to do too much from the top. These are not programmes of the people. The Diocesan leadership is directing its energies into encouraging local initiatives. This will be less glamorous and there will be no 'show pieces'. But we hope that the total sum of all the work at grass roots level will add up to much more than any single Diocesan level programme. All the Institutions and Pastorates are being encouraged to work out their own programmes, relevant to their own situation, and within their capabilities to implement. Several have already started on this. They can call on Diocesan leadership for inputs they find necessary. 'Small is beautiful' is our slogan. It is planned to have a children's day at Diocesan level towards the end of this year. This will bring together all these smaller efforts. The task of the Diocese will be that of co-

ordination. Any programme undertaken must be of real benefit to the child. That is obvious. But it is all too easy to have programmes which in fact exploit the child. For instance, programmes like this function this evening are necessary to create public awareness. But, we should not forget that the money spent on arranging this function would feed several children for the whole year.














There is a tendency to have all the programmes at institutional level, such as schools and hostels. There we have a ready made group of children who can very easily be exploited by enforcing what we think is best. This can be avoided by having the children themselves involved in the planning and implementation of programmes. The more senior children are capable of this with a little guidance. The International Year of Women was not organised by men! Let the children be fully involved in the planning of their programmes this year.

The natural environment of the child is in the family. There can be no real substitute for that. We must, therefore, give attention to family life. At the global level, so called advancement is often at the expense of family life. Can we do something this year to reverse the trend towards the break up of family life in modern society. With this in mind it is our aim to give more emphasis to the International Year of the Child in the congregations. Let us not be over concerned with children in isolation, but in the environment where they really belong—the family.

SAT TAL ASHRAM

The summer session will be held from May 21 to June 11. Individuals or families desiring accommodation, or cottage, may please write early. People of all faith are welcome.

The comprehensive three week programme under various able leaders will consist of:—

BIBLE STUDIES  MEDITATION  INDIGENOUS METHODS AND
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EXPERIENCE  WORSHIP  DISCIPLESHIP  STEWARDSHIP
CHURCH GROWTH  KOINONIA CELLS  SOCIAL CONCERNS
COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS  CARE OF SEEKERS AND CONVERTS
GROUP DISCUSSIONS  WORK PERIODS  MUSIC  GAMES
BOATING AND SWIMMING plus many moments of quiet

The total cost of meals, accommodation, electricity and water, will be about Rs. 9.50 per head per day. Families may however cook their own. Children half rates. Some Seminary students, if selected, may be given free hospitality but no travel.

Apply to:
THE ACHARYA, SAT TAL ASHRAM,
P.O. Bhowali Dist., Naini Tal, U.P. 263 132.

PASTORS OR PRESBYTERS

Active Pastors and Presbyters desirous of travel scholarship and concessions for attending this ashram session should apply to the address given above.

Book Review

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN TODAY'S ASIA

First Published: 1976. **Publisher:** The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Department of Church Co-operation and Department of Studies, Geneva.

Revised : 1978, C.L.S., Madras. **Price :** Rs. 12.

Editors : Dr. K. Rajaratnam and Dr. A.A. Sitompul.

Theologically viable, academically sound and pedagogically challenging, the book deserves to be taken seriously by anyone who 'does' theology today. The content is the outcome of an APAS (or APATS) Consultation on *Theological education (Training for Witness and Service)* in Asia which was held between the 21st and the 24th of October, 1975 in Manila.

In the key-note address the Rev. Dr. A. A. Sitompul of the LWF emphasises the need for total indigenisation of Asian theological seminaries; according to him, societal orientation of theological education and the maintenance of the Lutheran 'identity' (through 'pure' gospel and confession) in modern ecumenicity are also other needs. The open-ended question raised by him envisage deliberation on the strategies necessary to relate traditional theology to modern culture, rural and urban; to preserve the integrity of the Asian Lutheran Church in its prophetic, missiological and ecumenical functions; and to achieve self-reliance in Asian theological seminaries.

In his theme paper, *Lutheran Contribution in Asia in Ecumenical Context*, the Rev. Dr. Yoshiro Ishida of Japan calls upon the Asian theological trainee not to miss the 'basic text' of the Bible and not to be lured away from it by the calls of radical, fundamental and relevance theologians all of whom tend to ignore either the Christian core gospel or the contemporary situation. Speaking of the Lutheran identity he urges the Lutheran Church to prefer 'local participation' to 'Lutheran solidarity'; the Witnessing Church to a denominational Church; and confession to confessionality. His appraisal of the 'Law' as a universal order rather than 'a timeless deposit of doctrine' enables him to speak of evangelism as a sharing of questions and needs by all men, irrespective of caste or creed and of the accomplishment of it as a sharing of the 'answer' which lies only in Christ. So he decries 'modern doceticism', a name he uses to refer to the widely prevalent 'romantic universalism' which ignores Christian specifics. Accordingly, he recommends a universal-particular dynamics which has, as its basis, not tradition but 'traditioning' which is a combination of past Christian tradition and present Christian Witness.

The second major address, *The Church Prepares for the Future through Theological Education*, presented by the Rev. Dr. Robert D. Mc Amis of the Philippines highlights the need for the contextualization of Asian theological education. According to Dr. Amis, indigenisation, if it is genuine and complete, ought to cover culture secularity, science and social institutions. True contextualisation is the result of 'the encounter between God's Word and God's World'. Dr. Amis lists the characteristics of sound theological education: it ought to be theological, culturally relevant, confessionally oriented, pragmatic, personal and creative. In his discussion of TEE (Theological Education by Extension) he highlights its advantages although he is

considerably sceptical about the success of a system of non-formal education which has to go without the advantages of full-time residential education.

In the next theme paper, *Self-reliance in Theological Education*, the Rev. Dr. Andrew K.H. Hsiao of Hong Kong offers statistical evidence to show that an achievement of economic independence by Asian seminaries generally hampers academic excellence and he calls upon the local church to give top priority to theological education and the seminaries themselves to minimize spending on items which may be dispensed with.

The last paper on *Methodological Research in Theology* presented by Dr. Anza H. Lema of the LWF spells out the task of the Asian Church as that of making 'Christianity more Asian without allowing it to become less Christian'. That culture-component which has to do with Christian moral and religious beliefs ought not to be compromised in deference to the corresponding culture-component of a local culture. On the other hand, other components which have to deal with behaviour (government, social institutions etc.) and expression (language, art, music, dance etc.) may be profitably Asianized. The Christian gospel should be made existentially relevant.

The case studies relating to the pioneer endeavours at promoting non-formal theological education in Lutheran seminaries at Hong Kong and Gurukul (Madras) offer helpful insights into the meaning, implications, relevance and role of this new way of imparting theological education. While acknowledging the essential break-through in the Asian theological education which non-formal education has made possible, the evaluators seem greatly concerned about the need to spell out the objectives, to define methodology and to programme the instruction sought to be given this way.

The Consultation endorses unanimously the need (a) to contextualize theological education in Asia, (b) to find methodological wherewithal to contextualize it and (c) to make use of strategies like non-formal education to achieve the goal. It is commendable that the consultation, unlike some others which are uncritically swayed by the spirit of innovation for its own sake, is sober in its deliberation, clear in its formulations and pragmatic in its plans. Here is sure evidence of the zeal of the Lutheran Church to feel 'one within the catholic Church' in the pursuit of theological tasks ahead. Especially commendable is the clearing away of a good deal of mist which beclouded the Church's first experiments with indigenisation in this century. However, the non-Lutheran outsider within the Church is at times made aware of the inhibiting restraint of denominationalism: somewhere in the proceedings of the consultation he is made to wonder whether or not theological abstractions—like the 'pure' gospel—are made to fortify what a free spirit would not like to. Secondly, the consultation could have made its contribution to non-formal education appear less uncertain by clearly defining the objectives of non-formal education, its purpose and the forms and ways in which its end-products are to be appropriated. As it is the scope of the discussion appears to be limited only to plans, procedures and methodology of this welcome new pedagogical strategy.

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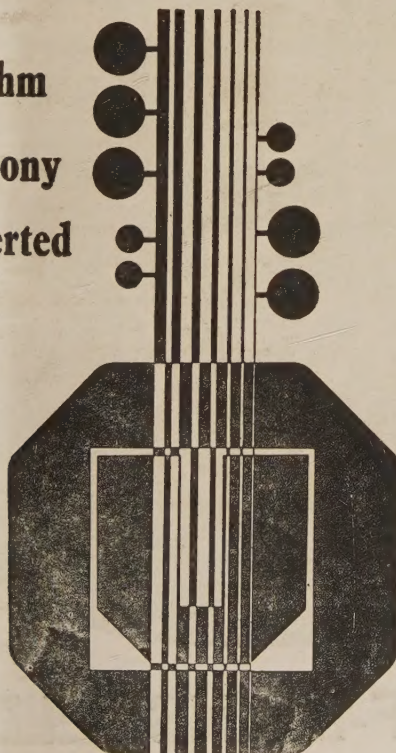
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